

**To: Assemblywoman Diane Harkey and Staff**

**From: Gino Folchi**

**Date: Sunday July 10, 2012**

**Re: Weekly HSR Clips July 2 to July 10**

### **Blogs**

#### **How Senate districts would benefit from CA high-speed rail**

As lawmakers prepare for a contentious vote later this week over billions of dollars in funding for high speed rail, Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg's office distributed a chart that shows the potential benefit of the project to each member of the upper house. **Senator Darrell Steinberg & Dan Smith** [SacBee](#) – 07/03/12

#### **Field Poll says: Fund HSR and Governor's bond measure may fail**

Gary Patton, an attorney who has been working on high-speed rail issues for almost three years, had this to say about the opinion: " Legislative Counsel seems to be striving to find ways to justify and uphold the legality of the Authority's proposed project, and does manage to find that the Business Plan and the project, are apparently compliant - - given that the "facts" need to be as the Authority is representing them." **Kathy Hamilton** [Examiner](#) – 07/05/12

#### **California's High Speed Rail Debate: The Winners -- and the Losers**

California Republicans -- The GOP thinks they have an issue, and were quick to recite the results of a recent Field Poll showing voters have turned sour on the project. But once again they have managed to alienate many in the business community who believe the project will lead to economic growth. One of these days, Republicans will realize they need to expand beyond their Tea Party base, but given the unanimous opposition to the project by GOP legislators, that day doesn't look like it's coming anytime soon. **Steve Maviglio** [CA Majority Report](#) -- 07/09/12

#### **A critical look at the high-speed rail funding vote**

We may never know what kind of "horse-trading or arm-twisting went on the night before but regardless the Governor came up with the 21 required votes, a majority of the 40 member Senate. "Only time will tell when the dust settles, what the true project cost was in order to get the final votes of the Senate democrats," offered Nadia Naik, co-founder of Californians Advocating Responsible Rail Design. **Kathy Hamilton** [Examiner](#) – 07/09/12

#### **'Thank God' for high-speed rail funding, Gov. Jerry Brown says**

"It's a jobs creator, and thank God we got it," Gov. Jerry Brown said of funding for high speed rail, narrowly approved by the Legislature last week. He and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood were at the Port of Oakland on Monday to take a victory lap. "When Abraham Lincoln, in the middle of the Civil War, started the intercontinental

railroad, he didn't know where the money was coming from," Brown said. Asked what will happen if the rest of the money doesn't come from the federal government, he said, "If that happens, come and talk to me and I'll tell you." **Chris Megerian** [LAT](#) -- 07/09/12

## **Columnists**

### **High-speed rail push leading to Nov slaughter?**

Meanwhile again, Brown is pushing his "[Tax-the-rich](#)" ballot initiative, which is looking less likely to pass, particularly as he and Democrats have redefined "the rich" to include those making \$250,000 annually. Don't forget Brown's arrogant recent statement that those making \$250,000 four years in a row will be millionaires. Brilliant. As he continues to promote bad policy in California like high-speed rail, and carbon emission schemes, voters are leery of allowing the state to control any more of their tax money. **Katy Grimes** [CalWatchDog](#) – 07/05/12

### **Will bullet train scuttle Jerry Brown's tax plan?**

A USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times poll in mid-May found that 55% of voters wanted the bullet train back on the ballot. And 59% said they'd vote against it. So for many Californians, the tax issue could be their vehicle to vote "no" on high-speed rail. A Field Poll in late May showed only a slim majority supporting Brown's tax. Munger's measure was even less popular. **George Skelton** [LAT](#) – 07/05/12

### **High-speed gravy train approved in Assembly and Senate**

The Senate barely eked out passage of the high-speed rail bill, after a very close vote, 21-16. The vote approves the sale of \$4.7 billion in bonds to begin building the Fresno to Bakersfield segment of high-speed rail. Ongoing lobbying of the wavering Senate Democrats continued even as floor speeches were taking place. The buzz was that stern phone calls were made, including calls from U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco. Sen. Gloria Negrete McLeod, D-Chino, was the decisive vote, after several attempts to reach 21 "yes" votes. **Katy Grimes** [CalWatchDog](#) – 07/06/12

### **Bullet train may collide with California tax measure**

Most tellingly, a new statewide Field Poll also tells us that if the Legislature authorizes the first stage of bullet train construction, it would adversely affect Brown's already iffy chances of gaining approval of new taxes. That should worry him and fellow Democrats in the Legislature. If they forge ahead on both fronts they could lose both because even if legislators approve bullet train funds, it faces many financial and legal hurdles. **Dan Walters** [SacBee](#) -- 07/06/12

### **California high-speed rail: on wrong track**

State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, probably is best known as the author of California's bill to ban the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. After Friday's vote, Simitian may be best known as the Democrat who warned his colleagues not to issue \$4.6 billion in bonds for big-ticket high-speed rail. **Debra J. Saunders** [SF Chronicle](#) – 07/09/12

### **California's bullet train won approval -- now what?**

And that brings us to what may have been the game all along – spending not on the bullet train itself but on so-called "connectivity" projects in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay Area. Last week's bill spends heavily on such things as electrifying commuter rail service on the San Francisco Peninsula, a subway in San Francisco, new cars for the Bay Area Rapid Transit system and upgrades for Southern California's Metrolink rail service. **Dan Walters** [SacBee](#) – 07/10/12

### **Diane Harkey**

#### **Gathering Votes for High Speed Rail: “You Can’t Always Get What You Want”**

To quote a rock and roll classic, when trying to gather votes for a statewide project you can’t always get what you want. One should expect a few snafus when a project concept begins in the mid 1990’s and takes years to get a Legislative buy-in. But, with the contorted track of progress and even shakier financial support for California’s High Speed Rail experiment, it appears if we move forward, all we may end up with is a stranded 130 un-electrified track in the Central Valley. **Assemblywoman Diane Harkey** [Fox & Hounds](#) – 07/05/12

#### **The Voters Get It**

After all, once this year’s Legislature terms out, who will remain behind to oversee and understand this complex project? Only the people of California; the more they learn the less they like, and the more they connect the dots between this centralized money and power grab and taxes. The voters get it, and if they remain engaged before and after November, Sacramento will follow their lead. Elections matter. **Assemblywoman Diane Harkey** [Flashreport](#) – 07/06/12

### **Editorials**

#### **Revamped bullet train plan deserves green light**

The Legislature must approve spending \$3 billion of the bond money in order to obtain another \$3 billion in federal money. The two sums will pay for construction of 130 miles of track between Madera and Bakersfield. This stretch is parodied as a train to nowhere, but it's nothing of the sort. It's the start of a huge investment in California's future and the jobs, benefits and sound planning that will benefit the state for decades. **Editorial Board** [SF Chronicle](#) -- 07/02/12

#### **Senators must not cave to last-minute high-speed rail sweeteners**

For Californians, the federal money should not be a key consideration. This is only \$3.3 billion toward a project that, by overly optimistic assumptions, will cost \$69 billion to complete, and has no viable funding plan for the rest. What lawmakers seem to forget is that the state's share must be paid back. In the past two decades, California bond payments have increased from less than 2 percent of the state general fund to nearly 6 percent, or more than \$5 billion annually. Payments on the high-speed rail bonds could easily add as much as \$750 million a year. **Editorial Board** [SJ Mercury News](#) – 07/03/12

**Bullet train: The facts should kill it**

So how does the California project look to the editorial board of The Washington Post, which can't be accused of right-wing bias? In a November editorial headlined "Crazy train," the Post cited many of the facts we offered. Its conclusion: "If the president and governor won't slam on the brakes, then Congress or the California Legislature must find a way to prevent the spending. Somebody, please, stop this train." **Editorial Board** [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) -- 07/04/12

**Will pork grease skids for bullet train?**

To make a boondoggle palatable to lawmakers, at least in the Bay Area, just add pork. The latest twist seems to compound problems previously raised. Rather than a portal-to-portal 200-mph train linking Southern and Northern California as its authorizing 2008 ballot measure promised, the plan has been modified to run slower through densely populated areas. That ostensibly helped reduce costs from \$98 billion to \$68 billion. **Editorial Board** [OC Register](#) -- 07/06/12

**Will state Senate toss a wrench in high-speed rail?**

DeSaulnier and Sens. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, and Alan Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, are all able legislators. All had legitimate criticisms of early actions by the high-speed rail authority. But these three are now starting to sound like infrastructure NIMBYs. As Lowenthal told the Los Angeles Times this week, "We're going to raise taxes to pay off debt service on bonds for a (high-speed rail) project that isn't going to be used by anyone for 10 years." Excuse us, but has anyone examined how the state built the freeways of Southern California, the bridges of the Bay Area or universities such as California State University, Long Beach? All involved debt and investments by taxpayers, and none was built in a day. **Editorial Board** [SacBee](#) -- 07/06/12

**Don't let parochial politics kill high-speed rail project**

As Lowenthal told the Los Angeles Times, "We're going to raise taxes to pay off debt service on bonds for a (high-speed rail) project that isn't going to be used by anyone for 10 years." Excuse us, but has anyone examined how the state built the freeways of Southern California and the bridges of the Bay Area? **Editorial Board** [Fresno Bee](#) -- 07/06/12

**Vargas, Peters and bullet-train baloney**

That's why we need explanations from the local Democratic lawmakers who all backed the plan, starting with Sen. Juan Vargas, who is running for Congress in a vacant South County seat. We'd also like to hear from former San Diego City Council President Scott Peters, a bullet-train supporter running against Rep. Brian Bilbray, R-San Diego. **Editorial Board** [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) -- 07/10/12

## **Field Poll**

### **Governor's tax measure clings to majority support**

Gov. Jerry Brown and fellow Democrats in the Legislature could deal a mortal blow to the governor's tax-increase initiative if they follow through on plans to appropriate billions of dollars for a high-speed rail system, a new survey suggests. **Jim Miller** [Riverside Press-Enterprise](#) – 07/04/12

### **Field Poll - Release #2415**

A just completed *Field Poll* finds voters supporting the Brown initiative 54% to 38%, but evenly divided on the other two tax proposals. On the Munger initiative it is 46% Yes and 46% No, while the Steyer proposal receives 44% Yes and 43% No votes. However, the survey also finds that the Brown tax plan would be adversely affected if the legislature proceeds with funding the state's controversial high-speed rail project. **Mark DiCamillo & Mervin Field** [Field Poll](#) – 07/05/12

### **Rail vote potential pitfall for Gov. Jerry Brown's tax initiative, Field Poll finds**

A fifth of likely voters who support Brown's proposal to raise taxes say they would be less likely to support it if the Legislature appropriates money for high-speed rail, the Field Poll found. **David Siders** [SacBee](#) – 07/05/12

## **News**

### **Correa looks for O.C. investment in high-speed rail**

Steinberg needs 21 "Yes" votes to get the high-speed rail appropriation out of the Senate, which means he could be looking to Orange County Sen. **Lou Correa** for help. Correa, Orange County's only Democrat in the state Senate, said Tuesday that he doesn't know how he is going to vote on the high-speed rail plan because he's yet to see the actual legislative language. **Brian Joseph** [OC Register](#) -- 07/03/12

### **Central Valley farmers protest high-speed rail**

Kings County, and Tos, are plaintiffs in a suit challenging plans to start high-speed rail in the valley on the grounds that those plans violate the high-speed rail bond measure. A judge in June ruled the suit premature but allowed its return if the High-Speed Rail Authority proceeds with its plans. It wasn't supposed to be this way. **Michael Cabanatuan** [SF Chronicle](#) – 07/05/12

### **Assembly OKs \$7.9 billion for high-speed rail**

In the Assembly, the appropriation was approved along party lines, 51 to 28, with no Republicans voting for the plan. (Former Republican Assemblyman Nathan Fletcher, who [became an independent](#) prior to his unsuccessful run for San Diego mayor, also voted in opposition.) Orange County's two Democrats in the Assembly were the only representatives from the county to vote for the plan: Jose Solorio of Santa Ana and Tony Mendoza of Artesia, whose district includes a piece of Buena Park. **Brian Joseph** [OC Register](#) – 07/05/12

### **Federal support for high-speed rail unclear**

Congressional Republican opposition now seems locked into party doctrine. Mitt Romney, the presumptive GOP presidential candidate, has sounded skeptical. A crushing federal debt will constrict future spending, and all of this complicates a project that is depending on the federal government for the bulk of its budget. "In light of the federal government's trillion-dollar budget deficits, there is no money for a lot of things, including the poorly planned, massive boondoggle of high-speed rail," Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Tulare, said Thursday. **Michael Doyle** [Fresno Bee](#) – 07/06/12

### **Senate passes high-speed rail funding, which now goes to governor**

The project had become increasingly controversial as Democratic senators from around San Francisco and Los Angeles asked why construction was set to start with a 130-mile stretch in the Central Valley. "The ridership is not in the Central Valley," said Sen. Leland Yee (D- San Francisco), speaking Thursday night. "The ridership is along the 101 corridor," referring to the U.S. highway stretching from the Bay Area to Los Angeles.

**Chris Megerian** [LAT](#) – 07/06/12

### **California approves high-speed rail project after years of debate**

In fact, not one Democrat from the Senate's unofficial bullet train oversight group -- including Mark DeSaulnier, D-Concord, and Alan Lowenthal, D-Long Beach -- supported the project. Fran Pavley, D-Santa Monica, was the fourth Democrat who voted no. The group said they support the bullet train in concept but opposed it because of high costs, uncertain funding prospects to complete the line and the plan to spend so much in the Central Valley. **Mike Rosenberg** [SJ Mercury News](#) -- 07/06/12

### **California gives OK to high-speed rail**

House Oversight Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) is investigating the use of the system's federal money and has indicated the committee could hold a hearing this summer. Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.) tacked on an amendment to the House funding bill for DOT that prevents the department from spending on Golden State's fast trains. And GOP state Sen. Doug LaMalfa, the system's most vocal dissenter in the Senate, is not giving up after his campaign to spike the bill in the state legislature failed. He will push for voters to have another chance on the ballot to vote on the system. **Burgess Everett** [Politico](#) -- 07/06/12

### **Kern divided on high-speed rail vote**

Sen. Michael Rubio, D--Shafter, issued a statement saying he voted in favor of the project. "The construction of the Central Valley segment will create about 100,000 year-long jobs in the Valley," Rubio stated in the news release. "Unemployment rates in Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare counties are unacceptable and high-speed rail guarantees jobs for the Central Valley." Sen. Jean Fuller, R-Bakersfield, issued a statement saying she was against spending \$8 billion on the project. "I am extremely disappointed by today's vote in the Senate," she said in the news release. "High-speed rail is a luxury California can't afford." **Anna Burleson & Rebecca Kheel** [Bakersfield Californian](#) -- 07/06/12



### **Valley Dem Rubio votes 'yes' on HSR**

Sen. Michael Rubio, D-Bakersfield, was among those voting "yes" on the measure, disappointing some of his constituents in Kings County, where opposition to the \$68.4 billion project has been fierce. Aaron Fukuda, whose Hanford home sits in the path of one proposed rail route through the county, said Rubio "will have to answer for his vote." "I don't think very much of him now," Fukuda said. "He's not much of a representative. He knows the impact this will have." Fukuda was among many in the Valley who reacted strongly to Friday's vote. **Tim Sheehan** [Fresno Bee](#) – 07/06/12

### **Simitian flips stance on high-speed rail**

Yet in the hours before Friday's showdown, many Capitol insiders thought Simitian was the swing vote capable of single-handedly killing or launching the project, as no one -- not even his staff -- knew how he would vote. After Simitian's unexpected "no vote," Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, a huge bullet train backer, was seen canvassing the floor and talking to individual members. Afterward, a relieved Steinberg said it was one of the closest calls he's ever seen in Sacramento. **Mike Rosenberg** [SJ Mercury News](#) -- 07/08/12

### **High-speed rail officials rebuffed proposal from French railway**

"It's like California is trying to design and build a Boeing 747 instead of going out and buying one," said Dan McNamara, a civil engineer who worked for SNCF's U.S. affiliate. "There are lots of questions about the Parsons Brinckerhoff plan. The capital costs are way too high, and the route has been politically gerrymandered." **Dan Weikel & Ralph Vartabedian** [LAT](#) – 07/09/12

### **SD region gets \$100M in high-speed rail money**

The region is counting on an immediate \$100 million, in addition to millions more in the future, to keep three key transit projects on track, according to Gary Gallegos, executive director of the San Diego Association of Governments. Those are making improvements along the Blue Line trolley from downtown to San Ysidro, installing a federally mandated computerized safety system in North County and upgrading train service between San Diego and Los Angeles. **Michael Gardner** [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) -- 07/09/12

### **California's bullet train faces new challenges after funding approval**

As California secures the riches needed to start building a high-speed rail line, some longtime bitter foes of the bullet train are beginning to back off -- yet from the courtroom to the boardroom, other opponents are preparing for one last shot at blocking the historic project. **Mike Rosenberg** [SJ Mercury News](#) -- 07/10/12

### **Op-Eds**

#### **5 Reasons The California High-Speed Rail Project Shouldn't Get More Money**

If the state starts building a high-speed train system somewhere between Bakersfield and Fresno it will run out of money well before the system is finished. That's okay with many train advocates, who figure once construction begins the government will be forced to

find the rest of the money to avoid having a partially built \$10 billion train to nowhere sitting in the Central Valley. But the legislature can't afford to be so fiscally reckless. It needs to demand a detailed plan showing how the full rail system will be funded before approving the bond money to start construction. **Vranich, Cox & Moore** [Flashreport](#), [Reason](#) – 07/03/12

### **High-speed rail boosts economy**

One word: jobs. The project will create an estimated 450,000 direct job-years throughout its lifetime, as well as a million job-years from all economic activity generated by the statewide project. It is the lack of jobs that is causing our state's budget crisis as tax revenues have plummeted while the unemployed draw on public services. With high-speed rail starting construction next year, the huge number of new jobs generated will dramatically increase tax revenues flowing into the state budget. **Dennis Lytton** [w/Californians For High-Speed Rail San Bernardino Sun](#) -- 07/04/12

### **Governor on right track with high-speed rail push**

But their feelings about the project will change when they start seeing the jobs that \$3.4 billion in federal money creates. And although critics have valid points about the potential costs in this shaky economy, we have to keep thinking 20 years down the road. That's true whether you're talking about high-speed rail or the Central Subway here in San Francisco. If you're into instant gratification, go find a hooker. **Willie Brown** [SF Chronicle](#) – 07/07/12

### **Watching The Train Wreck**

In theory, those of us who will be leading the campaign against Brown's tax hike should be glad that he and his tax-and-spend liberal allies have just handed us Exhibit A in our argument that Sacramento's perverse spending priorities provide more than sufficient justification to reject higher taxes. But the truth is different. Those of us who love California and want our children to stay here instead of moving to states where there are more bountiful opportunities were hoping against hope that our elected leadership would not waste billions of dollars in such a cavalier manner as they did on Friday. **Jon Coupal** [Flashreport](#) -- 07/09/12

### **High-speed rail plan lacks common sense**

Not that a better plan was in the offing from the California High-Speed Rail Authority, formed in 1996. The best it has produced is a business model whose costs have increased as the plan's promises decreased. It's all been an object lesson in how to ruin a good idea. **Bruce Maiman** [SacBee](#) – 07/10/12

### **Is California's high-speed train on track or off the rails?**

High-speed rail could wind up as a techno-evolutionary dead end, or it could be a model for the nation, one for which future Californians will bless us. That's why government undertakes big, important, useful things: because no one else can, or will. **Pat Morrison** [LAT](#) – 07/10/12



## **Reports**

### **California's High-Speed Rail Realities: Briefly Assessing the Project's Construction Cost, Debt Prospects, and Funding**

Applying this 45% inflation factor to the CHSRA's April 2012 budget of \$68 billion, we arrive at a realistic potential total cost of \$99 billion for a truncated HSR project (referred to as 'Blended'), shown alongside the previous estimates in Figure 1 below (for simplicity, we will accept the "low cost" \$68 billion figure from hereon). **Christopher Knight** [California Common Cause](#) – 07/05/12

## **Video**

### **Senator Simitian High Speed Rail floor comments**

In this 17 minute video, State Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto) discusses his past support of high speed rail, his efforts to keep the Authority from being eliminated and finally, his reasons for opposing SB 1029. **Staff** [CA Senate Majority Caucus](#) -- 07/06/12

**\*\*Credits:** These clips are compiled from articles listed on Rough & Tumble, Flashreport and various alerts from Google News. Every effort is made to source articles correctly.